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*Considerations on the Nature and Oeconomy of Beasts  
and Cattle.*

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S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE

CHURCH OF ST. LEONARD, SHOREDITCH,

On the TUESDAY in WHITSUN Week, MAY 17, 1785.

Being a SEQUEL to a DISCOURSE on the RELIGIOUS USE of  
BOTANICAL PHILOSOPHY.

By WILLIAM JONES, M.A. K  
FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

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L O N D O N,

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И О Р Е С

CHURCH OF ST. LEONARD, SHOREBRIGHT

On the TUE. DAY in WYTHSON Wood, 1783.



Being a Special to a Disc on the 1st of June 1900

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

W O D W O

RECEIVED



**D E D I C A T I O N.**

**TO**  
**JOHN FRERE, ESQUIRE,**  
**Of ROYDON, in NORFOLK.**

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**S I R,**

**W**HEN I published my Sermon on **THE RELIGIOUS USE OF BOTANICAL PHILOSOPHY**, I presented it to a character of the first eminence in that line of learning.

To whom can I send the following **CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ANIMAL CREATION**, but to the Friend, without whose persuasion and encouragement I should have brought neither of these subjects into the pulpit? If  
I have

I have incurred any censure, you must take your share of it; if I have done the public any service, the merit is rather yours than mine, on more accounts than one: for it must be my own fault, Sir, if I have not succeeded the better for the benefit of conversing so frequently with you; who, from the stores of a cultivated mind, can always furnish something useful and instructive to your friends.

That you may continue to be through life what you now are, a patron of the arts, an ornament to learning, and a friend to true religion, is the ardent wish of,

S I R,

Your most obliged,

and very faithful

humble Servant,

NAYLAND,  
JULY 2, 1785.

WILLIAM JONES.



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A

S E R M O N, &c.

*And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. GEN. i. 25.*

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WHEN the works of God were finished, his eye surveyed them, and saw that they were *good*: that they were perfect in their construction, and capable of answering all the ends to which they were appointed. As far as man can observe this *goodness* in the works of nature, and see the mind of the Creator in the creature, so far he sees things as God sees them, and becomes partaker of a divine pleasure.

On a former occasion, I endeavoured to point out some of that goodness which is found in the *vegetable kingdom*\*: from

\* See a Sermon on *the Religious Use of Botanical Philosophy*, 1784.

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whence

whence I shall now proceed to the *animal*, with a desire to trace the same goodness in the structure, qualities, and œconomy of living creatures; but confining myself chiefly to those spoken of in the text, *beasts* and *cattle*.

When vegetable and animal life are compared, different things are to be admired, but nothing is to be preferred; for the wisdom of the Creator, being infinite, is every where equal to itself; to its works nothing can be added with advantage, nothing can be taken from them without loss. All things are perfect in their several kinds, and possessed of that goodness or sufficiency which must be found in every work of God.

Yet there is a visible series or scale in the natural creation; where those derivative powers which are in the creature, rise from the lower to the higher, and keep ascending regularly till we can follow them no farther. When we pass from a lower to an higher order of beings, some new faculty presents itself to our admiration. Thus, betwixt plants and animals there are essential differences, which immediately strike us. A plant is a system of life, but insensitive, and fixed to a certain spot. An animal hath voluntary motion, sense, or perception, and is capable of pain and pleasure. Yet in the construction of each there are some general principles which very obviously connect them. It is literally as well as metaphorically true, that trees have limbs, and an animal body branches. A vascular system is also common to both, in the channels of which life is maintained and circu-



circulated. When the trachea, with its branches in the lungs; or the veins and arteries, or the nerves, are separately represented, we have the figure of a tree. The leaves of trees have a fibrous and a fleshy part; their bark is a covering, which answers to the skin in animals. An active vapour pervades them both, and perspires from both, which is necessary to the preservation of health and vigour.

The parallel might be extended to their wounds and distempers: but we must not be too minute, when our purpose is rather to raise devotion than to satisfy curiosity. However, it ought not to be omitted, that the *vis vitæ*, or involuntary mechanical force of animal life, is kept up by the same elements which act upon plants for their growth and support.

The organs of respiration acted upon by the air, are as the first wheel in a machine, which receives the moving power: heat preserves the fluidity of the blood and humours, and acts as an expanding force in the stomach, heart, and blood-vessels; which force is counteracted from without by the atmospherical pressure; for the want of which, the vessels would be ruptured by the prevailing of the force within.

The nerves form another distinct branch of the animal system, and are accommodated by the Creator to the action of that subtle forcible fluid, which in its different capacities we sometimes call *light* and sometimes *ether*. Late experiments have shewn

us how little this acts on the blood-vessels, and how powerfully on the nerves and muscles, the functions of which it will therefore restore, and hath done in several cases, when they have been impaired by diseases or accidents.

The animal mechanism, and the forces of life, are things fearful and wonderful in themselves, and of such deep research, that I am afraid of venturing too far: but thus far I think we are safe, that animal life, considered only as *motion*, is maintained like the other motions of nature, by the action of contrary forces; in which there is this wonderful property, that neither appears to have the priority; and their joint effect is a motion, which in theory is perpetual. The flame of a candle cannot burn without fire, nor be lighted without air: which of these is first we cannot say, for they seem co-instantaneous; and they continue to work together till the matter fails which they work upon.

Thus when an animal is born into the world, and the candle of life is lighted up, it is hard to give any precedence to the elementary powers which support it. The weight of the atmosphere forces into the lungs, as soon as they are exposed to its action, that air which is the breath of life; but this could not happen, unless the more subtile element were to occasion a rarefaction within: and this reciprocation once begun, is continued through life: though it will fail if either of the elements cease to act upon it. With extreme cold, the circulation of the blood  
will



will stop; and the want of air, or the admission of that which is improper, will extinguish the vital motion in the lungs. But here, as the power of the Creator is found to maintain a vegetable life in plants where the necessary means seem to be wanting; so, when we think the mechanism of animal life is understood, and that heat, and respiration, and circulation, are all necessary to it, we look farther, and find animals living without respiration; some totally, and others (which is more wonderful) occasionally. Some are comparatively, if not positively, cold in their temperature; as those which lie under water in the winter months. These are unable to endure that degree of heat which is the life of others: as there are plants which fix themselves upon the bleak head of a mountain, and will never be reconciled to a richer soil and a warmer air. Thus doth the wisdom of God work by various ways to the same end; and animal life is maintained where the means of life seem to be wanting. That the elements which act upon the barometer and thermometer are necessary to animal life cannot be doubted, however the receptive faculties of organised matter may be varied. We have musical sounds from the pipe, the string, and the drum; but never without the musical element of air.

If we enquire how the wisdom of the Creator is displayed in the different kinds of animals, the field is so large, that the time will permit us to consider those only to which we are directed by the words of the text, *beasts of the earth and cattle after their kinds*. And that we may proceed herein without confusion, we must

must take advantage of a plain and significant distinction which the holy scripture hath proposed to us for our learning.

The Law of *Moses*, in the xi<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Leviticus*, divides the brute creation into two grand parties, from the fashion of their feet, and their manner of feeding; that is, from the *parting of the hoof* and the *chewing of the cud*; which properties are indications of their general characters, as *wild* or *tame*. For the dividing of the hoof and the chewing of the cud are peculiar to those cattle which are serviceable to man's life, as sheep, oxen, goats, deer, and their several kinds. These are shod by the Creator for a peaceable and inoffensive progress through life; as the Scripture exhorts us to be *shod* in like manner *with the preparation of the gospel of peace*. They live temperately upon herbage, the diet of students and saints; and after the taking of their food, chew it deliberately over again for better digestion; in which act they have all the appearance a brute can assume of pensiveness or meditation; which is metaphorically called *rumination*, with reference to this property of certain animals.

Such are these: but when we compare the beasts of the field and the forest, they, instead of the harmless hoof, have feet which are *swift to shed blood*\*, sharp claws to seize upon their prey, and teeth to devour it; such as lions, tygers, leopards, wolves, foxes, and smaller vermin.

\* Rom. iii. 15.



Where one of the Mosaic marks is found, and the other is wanting, such creatures are of a middle nature between the wild and the tame; as the swine, the hare, and some others. Those that part the hoof afford us wholesome nourishment: those that are shod with any kind of hoof may be made useful to man; as the camel, the horse, the ass, the mule; all of which are fit to travel and carry burthens. But when the foot is divided into many parts and armed with claws, there is but small hope of the manners; such creatures being in general either murderers, or hunters, or thieves; the malefactors and felons of the brute creation: though among the wild there are all the possible gradations of ferocity, and evil temper.

Who can review the creatures of God, as they arrange themselves under the two great denominations of wild and tame, without wondering at their different dispositions and ways of life! Sheep and oxen lead a sociable as well as a peaceable life: they are formed into flocks and herds; and as they live honestly they walk openly in the day. The time of darkness is to them, as to the virtuous and sober amongst men, a time of rest. But the beast of prey goeth about in solitude: the time of darkness is to him the time of action; then he visits the folds of sheep and stalls of oxen, thirsting for their blood; as the thief and the murderer visits the habitations of men for an opportunity of robbing and destroying, under the concealment of the night. When the sun ariseth the beast of prey retires to the covert of the forest; and while the cattle are spreading themselves over a thousand

sand hills in search of pasture, the tyrant of the desert is laying himself down in his den, to sleep off the fumes of his bloody meal. The ways of men are not less different than the ways of beasts; and here we may see them represented as in a glass; for, as the quietness of the pasture, in which the cattle spend their day, is to the howlings of a wilderness in the night, such is the virtuous life of honest labour to the life of the thief, the oppressor, the murderer, and the midnight gamester, who live upon the losses and sufferings of other men.

The different qualities and properties in which brute creatures excel, are as manifest proofs of the divine wisdom as their different modes of living. The horse excels in strength and courage. His aptness for war is finely touched in the book of Job—*Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder—He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men: he mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword\**. When he heareth the sound of the trumpets, and the noise of the battle at a distance, the thunder of the captains and their shouting, he signifies by his voice and his motion, that he is impatient to join them and be in action. The fox excels in subtilty and subterfuge; and his arts find employment for some amongst mankind, who disdain to busy themselves in any useful study or labour for the benefit of the community.

\* Job xxx. 9.



The dog is gifted with that sagacity, vigilance, and fidelity, which qualify him to be the guard, the companion, the friend of man; and happy is he, who finds a friend as true and uncorrupt as this animal; who will rather die by the side of his master than take a bribe of a stranger to betray him. The sense whereby he is enabled to trace a single person through a croud of people, is a gift of the Creator, which exceeds our comprehension: and many other examples of the sagacity of this creature would be incredible, if they were not common and well-attested. By what natural faculty they are performed, it is hard for us to conjecture.

In all brute creatures there is implanted an ardent attention toward their offspring, which prevails over every other consideration. Even the weakest creatures will undertake to defend and preserve their young at the hazard of their lives. They do not leave their offspring to be attended for hire by others, that they may be at liberty to follow their own unprofitable pleasures: this duty is their greatest pleasure; and yet it never exceeds the bounds of discretion. Beasts, with all their tenderness, are never betrayed into any acts of false indulgence: their affection never gratifies itself with raising up their young to an unnatural state of ease, idleness, and ignorance; as soon as they are well able to exercise the faculties the Creator hath given them, they are compelled by their parents to provide for their own wants. And, through the divine bounty, the world is open to them, and their own labour is sufficient to maintain them. Provision of the pro-

per sort is within the reach of every species, and a place is allotted to each, in which it does not encroach upon the rest. The mountains and rocks are *a refuge for the wild goats*, which climb over frightful precipices to a pasture where no other creature can partake with them. The beast of prey is covered by the wood, and can feed himself according to his nature. Foxes, and other animals, have holes wherein they rest and hide themselves under the earth. The sheep hath a fold, the ox hath a stall provided for them by man; having no covert provided by themselves. Beasts of labour are maintained by their labour; for few men are so unjust as to *muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn*.

The different manners of beasts and cattle, with their dependence upon the bounty of God, are briefly described to us in those sublime terms which are peculiar to the Scripture. *Thou makest darkness that it may be night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do move. The lions roaring after their prey do seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, and they get them away together, and lay them down in their dens. (Then) man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening; and those serviceable worthy creatures, which are the companions of his labour, go along with him.—O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches. All creatures wait upon thee, that thou mayst give them their meat in due season. When thou givest it them, they gather it: and when thou openest thine hand they are filled with good.* How great is this idea!



idea! the hand of man scatters food to the few creatures that are about him; but when the hand of God is opened, a world is fed and satisfied.

The usefulness of cattle to the support, comfort, and convenience of man, is a topic which would carry us out to a great length. The state of man, as an inhabitant of this world, could not be maintained without them. From cattle we have food, and raiment, and assistance, and employment. How wisely and mercifully is it ordained, that those creatures which afford us wholesome nourishment are disposed to live with us, that we may live upon them. Their milk is so agreeable to the human constitution, and so pleasant in itself, that it is celebrated among the first blessings of the promised land. The wool of the sheep gives us clothing, such as the world cannot equal: and late discoveries explain to us an essential difference between the vegetable clothing and the animal; the former of which draws off, the latter retains and promotes animal heat; and is found to assist in the cure of some very critical distempers. What would the labour of man avail, without the strength and patience of beasts to assist him in the cultivation of the earth, and the necessary business of life? Even the fiercest of creatures, *made to be taken and destroyed\**, have their use; for, in taking and destroying them, man is employed; and so one great purpose of his present life is answered. Whoever

\* 2 Pet. ii. 12.

considers this, will find, that the true state of nature is a state of society ; in which men are necessarily united against the beasts of the field, which would otherwise prevail against them : and he is fittest to be a leader in natural society, who can best defend others against their natural enemies the beasts. Thus from the nature of wild beasts arises one of the employments of man, which is that of hunting : to which war is nearly allied, as another sort of hunting ; and it should never be entered upon, but for reasons the same with those which arm us against the beasts that would devour us ; that is, for self-defence : though it is too true in fact, that men hunt men for their spoils, as they hunt wild beasts for their skins : and the scalps of men are the trophies of some, as the scalps of foxes are nailed up by others against a wall.

Hunters and warriors make a great figure in the world ; but he that feeds the sheep is more honourably employed than he who pursues the lion. The attendance of man upon those innocent creatures which God hath ordained for his use, is an employment which succeeded to the life of paradise. The holy patriarchs and servants of God were taught to prefer the occupation of shepherds. Their riches consisted in flocks and herds ; and it was their pleasure, as well as their labour, to wait upon them in tents, amidst the various and beautiful scenery of the mountains, the groves, the fields, and streams of water. The fancy of man hath always been delighted with the simple pleasures of the pastoral life ; which probably afforded matter to the



first poetry before the tumultuous scenes of war and slaughter had been celebrated in verse. Whatever the improvements of modern times may be, the imagination has a pleasure in resigning them all, to dwell upon the less improved manners of those who lived in the purer ages. O happy state of health, innocence, plenty, and pleasure; plenty without luxury, and pleasure without corruption! How far preferable to that artificial state of life, into which we have been brought by overstrained refinements in civilization, and commerce too much extended! where corruption of manners, unnatural, and consequently unhealthy modes of living, perplexity of law, consumption of property, and other kindred evils, conspire to render life so vain and unsatisfactory, that many throw it away in despair, as not worth having. A false glare of tinsel happiness is found amongst the rich and the great, with such distressing want and misery amongst the poor, as nature knows nothing of; and which can arise only from the false principles and selfish views and expedients of a weak and degenerate policy.

It hath been made a question, whether the world and the creatures that belong to it were made for the benefit of man? which question was well argued, and wisely determined in the affirmative, by the philosophical orator of Rome; but the modern infidel, to make man an inconsiderable being, has a strong propensity to the negative; and some poets, in their way of arguing, have attempted to make the subject ridiculous. We see that even the fiercest creatures have their use, by driving men  
into

into society for their mutual defence. All creatures in general are the subjects of man, whose dominion is established by a charter from heaven. By the reason and understanding of man, the swiftest are overtaken, and the strongest are overpowered: he can take them as his property, manage them as his servants, confine them as his captives, and destroy them at his pleasure: they are impressed with a fear and dread of him, as if they were sensible of his power. Most of them serve to some natural use; but all have their intellectual use, in giving necessary ideas and lessons of wisdom to the mind of man. The goodness of God is no where more manifest than in this intellectual application of brute animals and their properties; no one creature upon earth can make that use of man, which man makes of all the rest; in rendering himself, if he will, a better reasoner, a better citizen, a more devout worshipper of God. This is so important a part of our present subject; so curious in itself, and so necessary to the improvement of the human understanding, that I must beg your attention, while I dwell upon it as far as the time will permit.

1. First then, we borrow from beasts, cattle, and creeping things of the earth, many of our best ideas of moral good and evil. As it was said by *Solomon*, "Go to the *ant*, consider her ways and be wise;" so might it be said with parity of reason, go to the sheep for a pattern of submission and obedience: go to the ox for an example of patient labour. Go to the swine; consider its stubborn disposition, its intemperance, and beastly unclean-



uncleanness; and thence learn to abhor and avoid them. The passage taken by St. *Paul* from the poet *Callimachus* contains a plain allusion to the unprofitable character of this beast—“The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies\* :” for the swine of the Eastern countries drags its belly upon the ground, and is so incapable of speed, that it can scarcely walk. And such is man, if he is a slave to his bodily appetites; his feet are retarded by the heaviness of his nature, and he can make no progress in any work that is good, useful, or ingenious.

The first man was instructed in Paradise from the qualities of brute creatures, which God summoned before him for his observation. The first writing in the world was by pictures and forms of animal life, for the conveying of religious and moral truth to the mind, before alphabetical writing was in use. These forms or likenesses had been abused by the idolaters of Egypt, so God forbade the use of them, and appointed the alphabetical signatures in their stead; which still retain some traces of the old animal forms†. The moral fables of antiquity are chiefly founded on the properties and manners of brute creatures, which are made to converse and reason according to the views and tempers of each, and so to give notice of the ways of different sorts of men. Thus also did God instruct his people in the

\* Κρητες αει ψευται, κακα θηρια, ψαθυροι αβυται. Tit. i. 12.

† See some very ingenious observations on the Origin and Progress of Alphabetic Writing. By the rev. Mr. *Dary*. Printed for Cadell.

law of *Moses*, by ordering their *diet* as they were to order their *conversation*. The unclean, and the rapacious, were prohibited, and, as it were, excommunicated; the useful, gentle, and obedient were selected for food and sacrifice. The prophets explain things in the same way. *Isaiab* describes the conversion of cruel and immoral heathens to the gospel of peace, under the figure of a miraculous reformation amongst the wild beasts of the earth; when *the lion should eat straw like the ox*, the wolf and the lamb should *feed together*, and all the savage kinds should put off the nature of evil beasts, as formerly when they had all lived quietly under the same roof in Noah's ark, a figure of the church of Christ. The New Testament carries on the same mode of instruction, and Peter is taught in a vision that a communication was to be opened between the Jews and the Gentiles, under the figure of a liberty to eat all kinds of unclean beasts, now to be made clean by their reception to the purity of the gospel \*. Even the ill qualities of the great adversary of mankind are set forth for our dread and abhorrence, from *Genesis* to the *Revelation*, under the emblem of the *old serpent, cursed above every beast of the field*; insidious, insinuating, double-tongued, and having the *power of death* in his bite. We see him again under the emblem of a *roaring lion*, going about and seeking what he may devour. Thus are all creatures serviceable, both good and bad, in giving us ideas for the improvement of the mind and manners.

\* See Acts x. Compare verses 14, 15, and 28.



2. We may observe next, that industry and activity are recommended to us by the example of the whole animal creation. All work that they may eat; and therefore, he who does not work is not fit to live. All creatures *seek* their meat from God: it is not provided for any of them in an inactive state, but they must employ themselves to find and obtain it. Birds of the air are upon the wing from morning till evening. Wild creatures must hunt before they can be fed. Some partake of that sentence of labour passed upon man after the fall, and labour with him for their daily food. If it is then the appointment of God, that all his creatures should be in action, the idle man is a monster in the creation, who must pay for his offence either by poverty, sickness, ignorance, or vice; and must in some respect or other become a nuisance to society: on which consideration, it is a great evil in government to maintain any, or to suffer any, for want of employment, to live idly.

3. From the state of beasts under the dominion of man, as God hath wisely established it, the parallel is very strong for the benefit and necessity of government amongst mankind.

Among brute beasts we find the two classes of wild and tame, totally differing in their manners, and in a state of hostility with each other. Man is over them all, to feed the gentle and domestic, to reward the laborious, and to secure them from the incursions of the common enemy. To the one sort he is a governor and protector; to the other an avenger, who ought not

to bear the sword in vain; for if he does, he himself must suffer by it as well as the beasts that are committed to his care; the enemy being equally at war with both.

Let us now suppose this law of subordination and subjection to be dissolved: let us suppose the authority of man to be withdrawn, and all animals abandoned to their natural liberty: what would be the consequence? The swine would make his part good by his impudence, and would root up the fruits of the earth in fields or gardens at his pleasure. Foxes, and other vermin, would no longer be thieves, because there would be none to judge them, and so they would take what they wanted by natural right. The wolves would scatter the sheep and tear them to pieces: the dogs, having no master to encourage and direct them, would forget their duty, and join the enemy: and thus the best part of the animal creation would become a prey to the worst. The dogs might perchance quarrel sometimes with a wolf; but the sheep would be no gainers by that.

In order to bring things to this state, the wolf might persuade the sheep, that the power of the shepherd is an imposition, a base encroachment of that tyrant and usurper man; that all creatures are born *free* and *equal*; and that they would see blessed times, if they were to assert their natural rights and become independent. The wolf that should thus argue for universal liberty, would be a wise wolf; for he would soon be a gainer: but the sheep that should admit the argument, and bring up her lambs  
in



in the doctrine, would be a silly sheep indeed; for she would soon be a loser; chased out of her pasture, and worried out of her life.

Among men there certainly is the same difference as among the beasts. There is a sort of them with hard and unfeeling tempers, impudent foreheads, idle dispositions, voracious appetites, and endless wants: who will push themselves into importance, and make their party good either by importunity or by force. There is another sort, modest, sober, and gentle; fearful of offending, and contented with a little. This difference, so obvious and indisputable, is totally overlooked by those who plead for universal liberty and natural equality: for men are no more equal in their natures than the lamb and the lion's whelp: and supposing liberty to be universal, the bold, the impudent, the idle, and the rapacious, instantly make their fortunes out of the peaceable and the patient. Therefore these can never live together in the world, but under the ordinance of God, who has appointed an authority of law and magistracy, which lays a common restraint upon all: whence all good men, who mean well and know their duty, will pray for those who are in authority, that God would direct their counsels and strengthen their hands in the execution of his laws, for the common good: that the fences may not be weak, nor the beast of prey find friends and accomplices within the fold. It is of pernicious consequence to the peace of mankind, that there is a certain wild spirit of reforming policy, which, whether it works with the commanding air and garb of philosophy,

phy, or with the powers of oratory, or the fancies of poetry, can never rest till it has made men wolves to one another ; for, as things are, this must be the effect of natural equality brought to its proper issue. If we would reason like men, let us first inform ourselves from the regulations and laws which God hath established in the world : this will be our best philosophy. When oratory takes us off from this ground, it is nothing but sophistry ; and poetry, when it misrepresents the nature of things, is delusion and madness.

4. But now, fourthly, as the animal creation sets before us the natural interests of men in society, it leads us farther on to the attributes and perfections of God ; as the stream, if we trace it upwards, must bring us to the fountain. The whole world, as an effect, is so constituted as to instruct us in the nature of its cause. Thus the effect of motion in the world demonstrates a cause which has motion from itself, and in which all other motion must begin. Derivative life in living creatures, must descend from a life which is original ; that is from a Being, *who*, as the Scripture speaks, *only hath immortality*.

The faculty of sight, so piercing and extensive in some creatures, and so necessary to all, directs us to an all-seeing power, from which nothing can be hid. He that made the eye must see with perfect sight, and be the witness of our secret thoughts. The appearance of mechanical art in animals, which is wonderful and incomprehensible in some kinds, is a specimen or emanation



tion of that consummate art and skill which are in the Creator himself. Natural affection in animals toward their young, is a proof that the Creator, who infused it, hath the same affection to his own creatures; especially to man, *for we are his offspring*. The workings of natural affection in the creature are appealed to, as a sign or pledge of his own tender mercies to us: *can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee*. Our Saviour insists upon a like example in nature to give us an idea of his own tenderness toward his people; *how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings*! From these and other like examples we infer with certainty, that whatsoever is good or excellent in the creature, the original of all that goodness is in the Creator himself; the whole world being as it were a transcript or transfusion of the Divine mind.

5. Lastly, from the consideration of those wonderful instincts which are found in living creatures, it should be our earnest desire and our highest ambition to have God for our teacher. The stork, the turtle, the crane, and the swallow, know their appointed times\*, and find an unbeaten invisible track through the air, and over the wide ocean to a distant climate. The spider spreads and suspends its web by the nicest rules of art. The beaver, the architect of the waters, builds an habita-

\* Jer. viii. 7.

tion which no human architect could contrive or execute. The bird weaves a nest of untractable materials, which it disposes and adjusts without any difficulty. The bee designs with unerring skill what no geometrician could teach, and measures its work in the dark. As a chemist, it has the grand secret of transmutation; extracting the sweetest of meat from the most poisonous of herbs. See how wise all these are, without the tedious forms of practice and experience! they have no elements to learn, but are well read by immediate infusion. From the same power, and in the same compendious manner, did the apostles on the day of Pentecost attain to the knowledge of all languages without learning them. The working of God is to us as unaccountable in the one way of teaching as in the other. And doth not God still give to man a sense and a power superior to reason, when he appears plainly to have given such a power to inferior creatures? Will not he still teach man, who continueth to teach the beasts of the earth and the fowls of heaven? Therefore, if any man lack wisdom let him ask of God, who certainly will give to men as liberally as to brutes; and they have a promise that they shall be answered if they apply for direction. Where shall the ant or the bee go, but to the Creator, to learn what no reason of man can teach them? And whither shall man go but to the same teacher? The knowledge he wants is not from himself, but from the spirit of truth, and the word of Revelation; and now, by the sending of the Holy Ghost, and the publication of the gospel, we see that fulfilled which was written in the prophets, *they shall be all taught of God*: the grace of God hath been given to all



all nations as universally as instinct hath been infused into all the kinds of living creatures : and so God is just and equal in all his works : what we have not in the ordinary way of nature, we obtain in the extraordinary way of grace ; which is the better and the wiser way upon all accounts : and he who pretends to have by nature what God giveth by grace, is more unprovided, and in a worse condition, than the beasts that perish.

6. Upon the whole ; the animal world sets before us the most evident assurances of the Divine wisdom, power, and goodness : and *our duty*, in respect to this subject, is equally plain from what has been said. As the government of all creatures is committed to man by the Creator, not obtained by chance, it must be considered as a *trust*, which we are seriously and faithfully to discharge. We think few men are fit to be kings, and are strangely apprehensive of despotism : yet is every man an absolute monarch over these poor brute subjects ; often shamefully abused by the wanton, the passionate, and the hard-hearted ! *A righteous man*, who doeth good from a sense of duty, *regardeth the life of his beast* \* : he abstains from all cruelty ; he rewards the labour of his brute servants and domestics, and delights to render their lives as easy and comfortable as he can ; knowing that he must give an account of this as of every other trust. In their natural capacity, he uses them for his benefit with thankfulness to their Maker : in their intellectual application, he derives improvement to his mind from the contemplation of their natures. That man

\* Prov. xii. 10.

is a poor animal, not worthy of the name of a man, who looks upon beasts as beasts look upon him, and learns nothing from them; when a wise man may gather so much instruction, to serve him in every relation of life, whether natural, social, civil, or religious.

When we see what wisdom is found in the beasts of the earth and the fowls of heaven; how they perform what surpasses the power of reason, because God worketh in them; let us apply to their teacher, that he may assist us in all the works necessary to the saving of our souls: that we may be as wise for the next world as they are for their well-being in this world. Whatsoever gifts and talents are necessary to them, they have by nature without asking, for they cannot ask: what we want, we must pray for; God having made his teaching unto us an object of choice, and endued us with speech for the great ends of praying to him and praising him. To him therefore, who is only wise, who only hath immortality, the Lord and giver of life, who is magnified in all his works, even the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, be ascribed all honour, glory, power, and dominion, now and for evermore, Amen.

F I N I S.

